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## Rutgers Launches Holocaust Studies Minor 75 Years After the Liberation of Auschwitz

New interdisciplinary minor addresses growing student interest in the history of the genocide that claimed the lives of 6 million Jews

By Lisa Intrabartola | January 27, 2020



*Liberation* is a bronze Holocaust memorial in Liberty State Park in Jersey City that was created by the sculptor Nathan Rapoport. It is one of the works of Holocaust remembrance students discuss in Jeffrey Shandler's course "Remembering The Holocaust".

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Rutgers will launch a new minor in Holocaust studies to address growing student interest in the history of the genocide that claimed the lives of 6 million Jews and millions of others during World War II, said Jeffrey Shandler, a distinguished professor in the [Department of Jewish Studies](#) at Rutgers-New Brunswick.

Rutgers students have a strong desire to learn about the Holocaust, he said. That's because many of them grew up studying the subject in New Jersey public schools – the result of a mandate passed by the state legislature in 1994 requiring education on the Holocaust and genocide.

"This legislation emphasizes that studying the Holocaust is meant not simply to learn about an era of history but to inform students' moral consciousness," Shandler explained. "As a result, many students regard this as a subject of special importance and wish to understand it in greater depth."

Rutgers will introduce the new interdepartmental minor in the fall of 2020. The birth of this new minor is especially timely, as we mark the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz today, Shandler said.

The milestone serves as a reminder that the generation of eyewitnesses to the Holocaust is growing smaller, he said. "We will soon approach the point where anyone who is a Holocaust survivor or had any

other direct involvement with this event will no longer be with us.”

“How does this development change the ways that we remember the Holocaust? We don’t stop remembering events of the past when there is no longer any living witness, but we do remember them differently,” said Shandler, who teaches the course [Remembering the Holocaust](#) and is the coordinator for the new minor. “One goal of the minor in Holocaust studies is to help students understand how recalling the past changes over time.”

The new interdisciplinary minor in Holocaust studies will include courses that explore the Holocaust from multiple perspectives offered by departments at Rutgers-New Brunswick’s School of Arts and Sciences, including Jewish Studies, History, Sociology and German.

“Students who enroll in this minor will acquire a deeper understanding of this historic event,” said Susan Lawrence, vice dean for undergraduate education, [School of Arts and Sciences, Rutgers-New Brunswick](#). “The hope is that through this interdisciplinary approach, they will leave Rutgers as more informed global citizens who can continue to confront the pressing challenges of anti-Semitism, racism, and other forms of intolerance in all of its forms.

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